

OCTOBER 11 - NOVEMBER 6, 2011

Dramatized by Christopher Sergel

Directed by Dennis Garnhum

Starring RH Thomson as Atticus Finch

## Student Activity Guide

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

### **I. BEFORE THE CURTAIN RISES**

Note to Teachers & Audience Advisory	3
Two Excellent Learning Resources	4
Prepare to Attend the Performance: Theatre Etiquette	5-6
Prepare for the “Meet the Actors” Session	6
Explore Situations and Issues	7
Focus on Courage	7
Crossword Puzzle	8-9
Dramatize a Scene from the Novel	10
Review the Reviewers	10

### **II. WHILE THE CURTAIN IS UP**

Plot and Character	11
Setting and Mood	12
Theme	12
Essential Questions	13

### **III. AFTER THE CURTAIN FALLS**

Reflect on Pre-Performance Activities	14
Cast a Feature Film Remake of the Play	14
Create an Act Three, Scene One for the Play	14
About Whom Are They Talking?	15
Matching Quiz	16
Write a Review	17
Write a Letter to the Director	17
Reflective Writing on the Theatre Experience	17
Representing Character, Context and Theme	17
Create a Keepsake Scrapbook	18

### **IV. ANSWER KEY**

Solution Vocabulary Crossword Puzzle	19
Solution to the “About Whom Are They Talking?” Quiz	20
Solution to the “Matching Quiz	21

## **A Note to Students and Teachers:**

We are delighted that you have chosen to participate in Theatre Calgary's Student Matinee Series and be a part of the audience in our production of *To Kill A Mockingbird*.

If this is your first experience with Theatre Calgary, we hope that this is the beginning of a life-long love affair with theatre and drama. If this is not your first time, we welcome you back and thank you for your continuing support.

At Theatre Calgary, we believe that all students (and adults) should have the opportunity to experience great theatre presented live on stage by professional and committed actors. We are optimistic that you will find this production to be an entertaining and memorable experience.

We also hope that you find the following learning suggestions for your students helpful. They are divided into activities to complete before, during and after attending a Theatre Calgary performance of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

It is not necessary for students to complete all the activities.

Consider only those that you believe meet the needs and interests of your students.

Feel free to post activities on D2L.

Enjoy.

## **AUDIENCE ADVISORY:**

Please be aware that to create realism and maintain authenticity, racially offensive language from the original novel and play script has not been edited from the Theatre Calgary production.

It is strongly advised that you discuss this sensitive issue with your students before attending the performance.

## TWO EXCELLENT LEARNING RESOURCES

In 1997, *The English Journal* published an extremely valuable resource for educators, entitled "Preparing to Teach *To Kill a Mockingbird*" In this [teaching guide](#) prepared by Charles Suhor and Larry Bell, there is a caution that "what seems wonderful or powerful to one group of students may seem degrading to another."

They also strongly recommend that students NOT be asked to read aloud any passage that contains the "n-word." They suggest that

"reading racial slurs and profanities aloud will have a different impact than seeing such words on the printed page and then talking about them in open class discussion."

Most public libraries now have available a new documentary [Hey, Boo: Harper Lee & To Kill a Mockingbird](#) (2011) featuring interviews with Oprah Winfrey, Rosanne Cash and many of the cast members of the 1962 film adaptation of the novel. It is 82 minutes long. Here is a [trailer](#) for the film.

# I. BEFORE THE CURTAIN RISES

## PREPARE TO ATTEND THE PERFORMANCE: THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Theatre etiquette —what is appropriate and not appropriate to do when you are in the theatre — is an important matter to consider before attending a play with your classmates. Below is a list of some “dos” and “don’ts” to consider. In groups, before referring to these lists, generate as many theatre etiquette rules as you can, including both “dos” and “don’ts.”

### DOS

- Arrive at the theatre early to ensure enough time to get to your seat before the performance starts.
- Stay seated with your feet on the floor.
- Turn off any cell phones, mp3 players, watch alarms or other electronic devices.
- Leave the talking to the actors on the stage.
- Eat your lunch or snacks in the lobby of the theatre before the performance or during intermission.
- Laugh, applaud, cheer and respond to the performance appropriately.
- Leave your cameras and recording devices at home.
- Feel free to share your thoughts about the performance with your teachers and fellow students after the performance.
- Make sure you thank the actors, crew and other theatre artists with your applause during the curtain call.
- Have an open mind and prepare to enjoy the performance beforehand.

### DON'TS

- Arrive late. Latecomers may not be admitted depending on the performance.
- Put your feet up on the chair or stage in front of you.
- Let your phone ring, send/receive text messages, or listen to your mp3 player during a performance.
- Talk or make any noise once the performance has begun.
- Eat your lunch or snacks inside the theatre.
- Shout, whistle or make comments during the performance.
- Take pictures or video during the performance.
- Share your thoughts about the performance while you are watching it.
- Leave the theatre prior to the conclusion of the curtain call.
- Make up your mind about how you feel about a performance before you’ve had a chance to see it.

Make sure to include reasons for the rules. An example is provided in the box below.

Rule	Reasons
<i>a. Don't text message during the performance</i>	<i>The actors are not blind. They can see the illumination of your device as you are texting. This is rude to the actors who are working very hard to entertain you. It is also very distracting.</i>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	

**PREPARE FOR THE “MEET THE ACTORS” SESSION**

After each student matinee performance, many of the actors make themselves available for a question and answer session with students.

From what you know of the play, which actors would you like most to talk with?

With a partner, generate at least three questions that you would like to ask these actors. The questions can deal with any of the following:

1. When and how they got into acting
2. Their favorite roles in past performances
3. What they do to prepare for their roles in the performance
4. Their interpretation of the work or the role they play
5. Special challenges of their roles
6. Any other aspect of acting or of the play that you are interested in

## EXPLORE SITUATIONS AND ISSUES

Before attending the performance, consider some of the situations and issues dealt with in the play. Below is a list of specific situations for you to consider.

Begin by asking yourself if you (or someone you know) have ever been in a similar situation. You can also consider characters in stories or films that you have read or viewed who deal with similar situations or issues.

Briefly summarize what occurred, and then respond personally by exploring your thoughts and feelings regarding the situation or issue.

Remember that *you do not have to respond to all* of the following - just the ones that you can most strongly relate to.

- a. Living in a small town
- b. Accepting a dangerous dare.
- c. Defending the actions or character of someone in your family.
- d. Learning about the hardships that someone in your community is facing.
- e. Seeing things through another person's eyes.
- f. Seeing someone exhibit true courage.
- g. Witnessing an injustice occur and not being able to do anything about it.
- h.

## FOCUS ON COURAGE

In groups, compile a list of people or characters that you believe have shown inner strength and courage.

You can include in your list:

- people that you personally know (friends, family, etc.)
- historical figures or people currently in the news
- fictional characters from feature films and other literature you are familiar with.

Once you have compiled your list, identify as many common characteristics as you can that the people in your list share. In other words, what are the main characteristics of people who exhibit inner strength and courage?

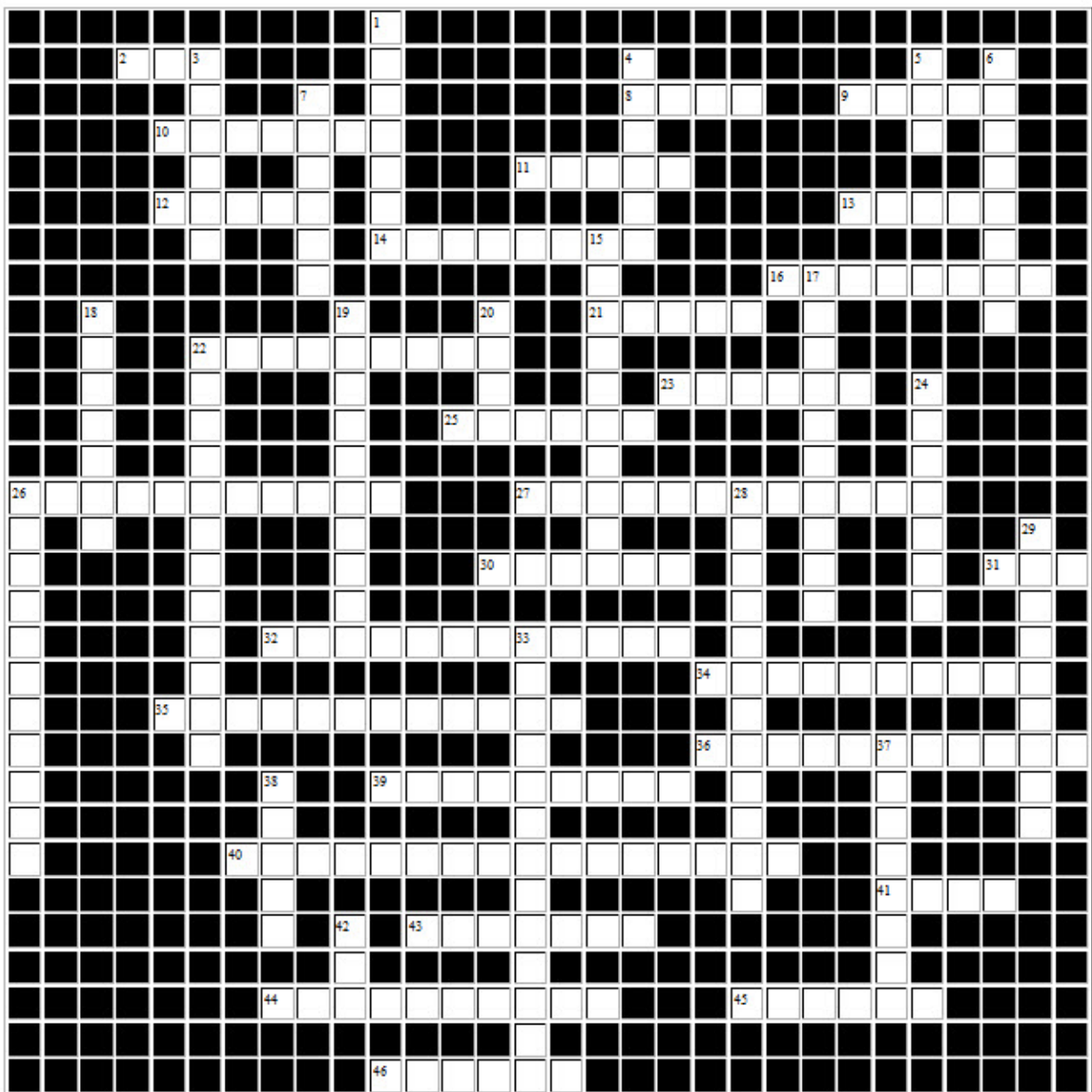
As you watch the Theatre Calgary performance of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, identify the characters who exhibit true courage and strength.

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Some of the clues (on the following page) for the crossword puzzle below deal with difficult vocabulary found in the dialogue in the play. The answers to the other clues can be found in the Audience Enrichment Guide (available at [www.theatrecalgary.com](http://www.theatrecalgary.com)). You should read the Enrichment Guide before attempting this puzzle.

Two word answers include a space between them.

### To Kill a Mockingbird



**Across**

2. reads to Mrs. Dubose
8. sheriff's first name
9. accept or live with (a decision)
10. being vulgar or disrespectful towards that which is sacred
11. ghost
12. Harper Lee's mom's maiden name
13. tomboy
14. confidence; audacity
16. laws that attempted to institutionalize racist beliefs and attitudes
21. angry; upset
22. takes care of the Finch children
23. a colorful bush with pink, yellow or purple blooms
25. used to fill hole in tree
26. grape plant common in the southeastern states
27. spells
30. indulge in negative emotion to get sympathy from others
31. gets shot in the middle of the street
32. hired hand with one good hand
34. closet like piece of furniture
35. Oscar winning actor who played Atticus
36. absolute; without qualification
39. odd
40. time period of the play
41. He is not missed when he runs away from home
43. setting of the play
44. where nine African-American men were wrongfully accused of rape
45. famous writer who was the basis for the character of Dill
46. stop

**Down**

1. dramatic work based on history or religion
3. unhealthy; diseased
4. slang word for whiskey
5. what it is to kill a mockingbird
6. use of drugs to induce sleep or relaxation
7. Boo's bro
15. cruel and unjust use of power
17. what Harper Lee is disinclined to give
18. peerless with a rifle
19. pays debts with turnip greens
20. Tom Robinson's alleged crime
22. alive or occurring at the same time
24. treating people with physical or verbal violence
26. not allowing African-American students to attend the same schools as white children
28. fear
29. left handed hitter
33. not noticeable
37. rude; presumptuous
38. number of Academy Awards won by the 1962 film based on Lee's novel
42. the town loner

For the solution to this puzzle visit [page 19](#).

## **DRAMATIZE A SCENE FROM THE NOVEL**

This activity will involve working in groups. To ensure that the entire novel is covered, each group will be assigned a certain number of pages from the novel to work with.

In your group, choose ONE specific scene to dramatize. The scene should be no longer than five minutes.

You are advised to choose a scene from the novel that already contains a lot of dialogue.

Create a script, complete with stage directions. Rehearse your dramatization and be prepared to present it to the class.

## **REVIEW THE REVIEWERS**

By the time you are scheduled to attend *To Kill a Mockingbird* at Theatre Calgary, the local papers and magazines will have printed reviews of the play.

Find and read at least two of these reviews.

You can start by checking out the [Calgary Herald](#) and the Calgary Sun ([Canoe.ca](#)) entertainment sections.

- What did the reviewers think of the performance?
- What did the reviewers like or dislike about the production?
- What important information did you learn about the play and the characters by reading the reviews?
- Based on the reviews, what are you looking forward to seeing in the performance of *To Kill a Mockingbird* at Theatre Calgary?

## II. WHILE THE CURTAIN IS UP

### Questions to Consider as you watch the performance of *To Kill a Mockingbird*

#### **PLOT AND CHARACTER**

- Unlike most plays, *To Kill a Mockingbird* utilizes a narrator to introduce the characters and advance the plot.

What did you think of this approach? In what ways was it effective or ineffective?

- The novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* has received criticism that the two main plotlines – the children’s interest in Boo Radley and Tom Robinson’s trial - are not well connected.

Do you agree? In what ways does the stage play succeed or fall short in bringing these two plotlines together?

- According to Shakespeare, “Action is eloquence.” In context of the theatre, that implies that actions – what a person does - often speak louder than words.

Identify three examples where what a character did on stage in terms of acting was more important to revealing or developing character than what he/she said?

Identify character traits, thoughts or feelings that the actions revealed.

- In your opinion, which characters were most realistically brought to life on the stage? How did the acting, or the direction enable this to occur?
- Create a brief character sketch of Atticus Finch. Identify important personality traits, values, beliefs, attitudes, dominant emotions, strengths, weaknesses, etc. and for each provide supportive evidence from the play.

## SETTING AND MOOD

- What were your first impressions of the set? In what ways was it interesting and multi-functional?
- What did you think of the costumes (and make-up if applicable) used in the Theatre Calgary performance of *To Kill a Mockingbird*?

What did the costumes/ makeup reveal or emphasize about the personality of the characters in the play.

- In small groups, or as a class, discuss how sound, music and lighting effects were used effectively during the performance.

Focus on the specific moods, atmosphere or effects the use of sound, music and lighting helped to create at various times in the performance.

## THEME

- Create three statements that Scout and Jem would agree with by the end of the story in terms of:
  - the nature of courage,
  - the process of justice
  - the effects of racial discrimination.

- Ultimately for a play to succeed, it should have something to say to a wide audience.

Even though *To Kill a Mockingbird* is set in Alabama during the 1930s, it can be said that the characters and conflicts are universal.

Do you agree? What significant things does this play have to say to us today in the 21st Century? Explain.

What choices (in casting, costumes, set, props, sound, acting, etc.) has the director made to ensure that this play appeals to a wider audience?

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

We relate to the characters and situations in *To Kill a Mockingbird* because the play poses basic essential questions about life.

Here, for example, are some of the many essential questions posed in the play:

- Why are we so fascinated by the odd behaviour of people?
- What happens to proud people when they are struck with poverty or hard times?
- What are the roots of racial discrimination and hate?
- Why is it that so many of us know so little about our parents?
- Why do people destroy things when they are angry with others?
- Why is there so much injustice in the world?
- How should we respond when we are faced with injustice or prejudice?

Choose any of the above essential questions to focus on as you are watching the play.

After the performance, complete any **two** of the following activities:

- a. Write a brief composition discussing what the play has to say about one or more of the essential questions.
- b. Create a poem (or series of poems) in which you share your thoughts and feelings on the treatment of any two of the essential questions.
- c. Create a promotional poster advertising a performance of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The poster should draw people's attention to the fact that the play deals with at least two of the important essential questions listed above.
- d. Write a letter to the director to share your thoughts and feelings about how the ideas and themes of the play are dealt with effectively in the performance.
- e. Write at least three other essential questions that you believe the play deals with.

### III. AFTER THE CURTAIN FALLS:

Activities to consider after seeing the performance of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

#### REFLECT ON PRE-PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES

What pre-performance information and activities best prepared you for the play?

What else could you have done or wished you had done to have better prepared you for your viewing of *To Kill a Mockingbird*?

#### CAST A FEATURE FILM REMAKE OF THE PLAY

Assume that another feature film version of the story is being made and that you have been given the job of finding a cast for it.

What well known actors would you choose to play the roles of the major characters?

To justify your casting choices, you should refer to other similar roles handled by each of the actors.

Which, if any, of the actors used in the Theatre Calgary production would you cast in your movie? Why?

#### CREATE AN ACT THREE, SCENE ONE FOR THE PLAY

Noted novelist, Truman Capote (who was the inspiration for the character of Dill) once wrote that "Life is a moderately good play with a badly written third act."

Consider this a challenge! Create a well-written scene for a third act of the play.

In other words, what happens next? Assume three months, or three years have passed.

Write a scene in which you explore what you think will happen in the lives of some of the characters in the play.

You may begin with – but do not limit yourself to - any of the following questions:

- Does Dill return to Maycomb? What new schemes does he come up with?
- Does Boo Radley return to his old ways or does he become more involved with the children and the community?
- What happens to Mayella?
- Does Atticus take on another difficult case?

Attempt to write the scene in a way that is consistent not only with the characterization in the play but also with the language used.

## ABOUT WHOM ARE THEY TALKING?

Read the quotes from the play in Column A and identify from the list in Column B about whom the speaker is talking.

Column A	Column B
1. _____ was all angles and bones.	
2. According to <b>her</b> , everybody in Maycomb has a streak – a drinking streak, a gambling streak, a mean streak, a funny streak	Atticus
3. As his father passed by, _____ drove the scissors into his parent’s leg, pulled them out, wiped them on his pants and resumed his activities.	Boo Radley
4. ... a pocket Merlin whose head teemed with eccentric plans, strange longings and quaint fancies.	Calpurnia
5. Why does <b>he</b> pay with stove wood and turnip greens?	Dill
6. Forgot to mention the other day that he was the deadest shot in Maycomb County.	Jem
7. _____ outa control. He’s gone mad! He’s knocking the tops off every camellia bush.	Mr. Cunningham
8. <b>She</b> wants me to read to her. She wants me to come over every afternoon and read out loud for two hours.	Miss Stephanie Crawford
9. I want the whole lot of you to know one thing right now. _____ worked for me eight years an' I ain't had a speck o' trouble outa him. Not a speck.	Mrs. Dubose
10. To my way of thinking, dragging <b>him</b> with his shy ways into the limelight – that’s a sin.	Tom Robinson

The answer key can be found on [page 20](#).

## MATCHING QUIZ

Match the descriptions in Column A with the correct characters from the list in Column B:

To refresh your memory of who the characters are, check the *Who's Who in the Play* (cast of characters) provided on page 13 of the Audience Enrichment Guide.

Characters in Column B may be used more than once.

Column A	Column B
1. That's not why my mind's come back here. There's something I have to do... Probably enough years have gone by - enough so I can look back ...	Atticus
2. From now on it'll be everybody less one.	Bob Ewell
3. ... and he doesn't like me – so he bound me in chains and left me to die in the basement. But I was secretly kept alive on raw field beans by a passing farmer who heard my cries for help.	Dill
4. Playing hooky, I suppose. I'll just call up the principal and tell him.	Heck Tate
5. I'd like to pay cash for your services, but between the mortgage and the entailment--	Jean Louise
6. Why Atticus couldn't get along a day without my help and advice	Jem
7. I'll – I'll fix her!	Judge Taylor
8. Calpurnia, could I speak with you? It's about Brother Tom Robinson's trouble. We have to do more for his wife and children.	Mayella Ewell
9. That'd make it her right. It was her right eye,... I remember now, she was banged up on that side of her face.	Mr. Cunningham
10. People generally see what they look for, and hear what they listen for. And they have the right to make whatever decision they consider best for their children.	Mr. Gilmer
11. Never called a doctor in my life. If I had, would've cost me five dollars.	Mrs. Dubose
12. Can't see what witness's literacy has to do with the case, irrelevant 'n' immaterial.	Nathan Radley
13. If you fine fancy gentlemen don't wanna do nothin' about it then you're all yellow stinkin' cowards, the lot of you.	Reverend Sykes
14. No, sir. Scared I'd have to face up to what I didn't do.	Scout
15. In the name of God, do your duty!	Tom Robinson
16. Tree's dyin'. You plug 'em with cement when they're sick	
17. Don't be so confident ...I've never seen any jury decide in favour of a black man over a white man.	
18. When I get grown, I think I'll be a clown.	
19. I mean, it'd be sort of like shooting a mockingbird, wouldn't it?	
20. I never heard tell it's against the law for a citizen to do his utmost to prevent a crime from being committed...	

The Answer Key can be found on [page 21](#).

## **WRITE A REVIEW**

Write a review of the performance of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Read several newspaper or magazine reviews to get a better idea of the style and structure of typical theatre reviews.

A good central source for reviews can be found at:

<http://www.curtainup.com/goingall.html>

Make sure that you do not follow any one review too closely.

Your review should reflect your personal perspective and evaluation of the performance.

## **WRITE A LETTER TO THE DIRECTOR**

Write a letter to the director commenting on what you enjoyed, or did not enjoy, about the production.

Focus on how elements such as casting choices, use of lighting, sound and music, costuming and acting contributed to your enjoyment of the production.

## **REFLECTIVE WRITING ON THE LIVE THEATRE EXPERIENCE**

Consider the reasons why so many people prefer attending a live sporting event such as a football, or a hockey game over watching the same event on TV.

Now consider the ways in which attending a live theatre performance could be preferable to watching a feature film on the big screen or a DVD at home.

What did you enjoy most about being part of the audience attending Theatre Calgary and seeing *To Kill a Mockingbird*?

Based on this experience, are you looking forward to attending another play in the near future? Explain.

## **REPRESENTING CHARACTER, CONTEXT AND THEME**

Create a poster by finding (or creating) a series of graphics, photos or illustrations, and words that you think serve, in significant ways, to illustrate or bring to life the characters, the situations, the themes or messages of the play.

Complete your representation on poster paper.

On the back side of the poster, briefly explain why you chose the graphics you did.

In other words, what does each of your visuals represent?

Please note that the explanation of the graphics on the back of your poster is not an essay or a formal piece of writing.

## CREATE A KEEPSAKE SCRAPBOOK

We hope that you enjoyed the experience of visiting Theatre Calgary and seeing a performance of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. As a permanent keepsake and record of this experience, we encourage you to create a scrapbook/journal which includes artifacts, assignments, and reflections.

Artifacts could include items such as theatre reviews from local newspapers, ticket stubs and a program.

You could also include the assignments and activities that you completed in preparation for your visit to Theatre Calgary as well as the “After the Curtain Falls” activities.

Here are some other ideas that you may wish to consider for inclusion:

- journal entry commenting on your opinion of the actors and how they brought their characters to life
- a published review of the play
- photographs taken before and after the performance (Remember that you are not allowed to take pictures during the performance.)
- drawings or sketches of the set
- questions you would like to ask the author, actors or director
- journal entry dealing with your thoughts and impressions of being a part of a live theatre audience
- graphics found on the internet relating to *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Be sure to credit sources.
- colourful cover and a detailed table of contents
- anything else that you think will make your scrapbook/journal worth going back to several years from now

Once your scrapbook/journal is complete, you may choose to share it with your teacher and classmates.

You may even choose to share it with the staff at Theatre Calgary.

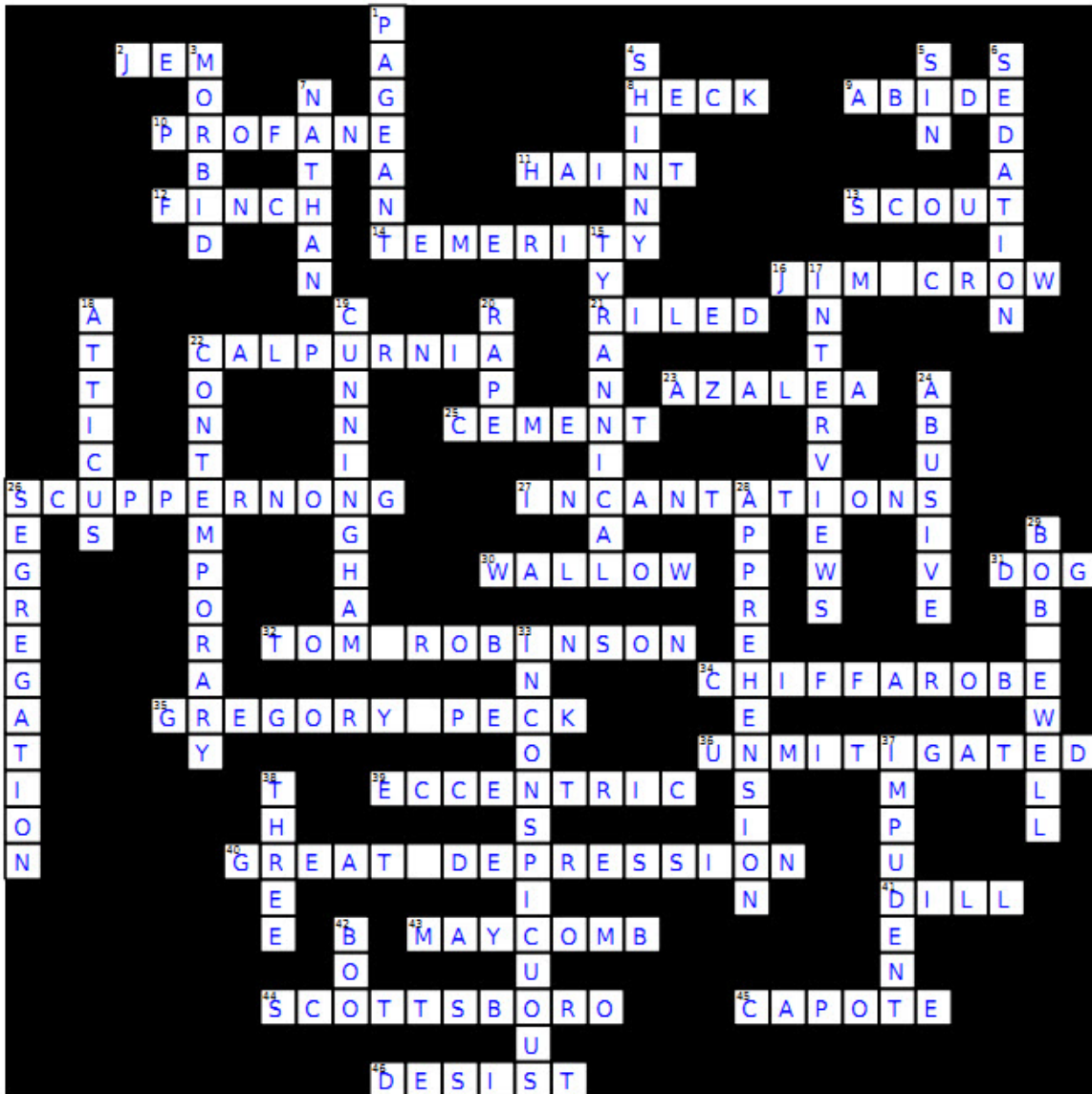
To do so, you should contact Ryan Bump and he will ensure that it gets shown to the right people.

Ryan Bump can be reached at 294-7440 ext.1391 or by email at:

[rbump@theatrecalgary.com](mailto:rbump@theatrecalgary.com)

#### IV. ANSWER KEYS

### SOLUTION: VOCABULARY CROSSWORD PUZZLE



## SOLUTION: ABOUT WHOM ARE THEY TALKING?

Column A	Column B
1. _____ was all angles and bones.	Calpurnia
2. According to <b>her</b> , everybody in Maycomb has a streak – a drinking streak, a gambling streak, a mean streak, a funny streak	Miss Stephanie Crawford
3. As his father passed by, _____ drove the scissors into his parent’s leg, pulled them out, wiped them on his pants and resumed his activities.	Boo Radley
4. ... a pocket Merlin whose head teemed with eccentric plans, strange longings and quaint fancies.	Dill
5. Why does <b>he</b> pay with stove wood and turnip greens?	Mr. Cunningham
6. Forgot to mention the other day that he was the deadest shot in Maycomb County.	Atticus
7. _____ outa control. He’s gone mad! He’s knocking the tops off every camellia bush.	Jem
8. <b>She</b> wants me to read to her. She wants me to come over every afternoon and read out loud for two hours.	Mrs. Dubose
9. I want the whole lot of you to know one thing right now. _____ worked for me eight years an' I ain't had a speck o' trouble outa him. Not a speck.	Tom Robinson
10. To my way of thinking, dragging <b>him</b> with his shy ways into the limelight – that’s a sin.	Boo Radley

## SOLUTION: MATCHING QUIZ

Column A	Column B
1. That's not why my mind's come back here. There's something I have to do... Probably enough years have gone by - enough so I can look back ...	Jean Louise
2. From now on it'll be everybody less one.	Atticus
3. ... and he doesn't like me – so he bound me in chains and left me to die in the basement. But I was secretly kept alive on raw field beans by a passing farmer who heard my cries for help.	Dill
4. Playing hooky, I suppose. I'll just call up the principal and tell him.	Mrs. Dubose
5. I'd like to pay cash for your services, but between the mortgage and the entailment--	Mr. Cunningham
6. Why Atticus couldn't get along a day without my help and advice	Scout
7. I'll – I'll fix her!	Jem
8. Calpurnia, could I speak with you? It's about Brother Tom Robinson's trouble. We have to do more for his wife and children.	Reverend Sykes
9. That'd make it her right. It was her right eye,... I remember now, she was banged up on that side of her face.	Heck Tate
10. People generally see what they look for, and hear what they listen for. And they have the right to make whatever decision they consider best for their children.	Judge Taylor
11. Never called a doctor in my life. If I had, would've cost me five dollars.	Bob Ewell
12. Can't see what witness's literacy has to do with the case, irrelevant 'n' immaterial.	Mr. Gilmer
13. If you fine fancy gentlemen don't wanna do nothin' about it then you're all yellow stinkin' cowards, the lot of you.	Mayella Ewell
14. No, sir. Scared I'd have to face up to what I didn't do.	Tom Robinson
15. In the name of God, do your duty!	Atticus
16. Tree's dyin'. You plug 'em with cement when they're sick	Nathan Radley
17. Don't be so confident ...I've never seen any jury decide in favour of a black man over a white man.	Reverend Sykes
18. When I get grown, I think I'll be a clown.	Dill
19. I mean, it'd be sort of like shooting a mockingbird, wouldn't it?	Scout
20. I never heard tell it's against the law for a citizen to do his utmost to prevent a crime from being committed...	Heck Tate